THE APRIL CONFERENCE

BY

V. I. LENIN

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

THE publication of his views regarding the revolution and the rôle of the Bolshevik Party soon after his arrival in Russia, initiated a campaign of vilification and slander against Lenin and the Bolsheviks. All political groupings opposed to the Bolsheviks joined in this campaign. Plekhanov considered Lenin's programme "a nightmare" and insinuated pro-German views back of it. Others charged Lenin openly with being an agent of the Kaiser, using his return via Germany as a pretext. The fact that the Allies would not permit the return of political emigrants to Russia and that a large group of Mensheviks, including their leader, Martov, was also forced to travel through Germany, did not matter. The bourgeois and social-patriotic parties quickly realised the meaning of Lenin's programme and were bent on discrediting him before the masses and neutralising his influence.

In his own party, Lenin found serious opposition to his views. The day following the publication of his "Theses," Kamenev countered with his article, "Our Differences," in the *Pravda,* declaring the views expressed in the "Theses" "unacceptable" and that Lenin spoke for himself and not for the Party. The Petrograd Committee of the Party voted overwhelmingly against the "Theses." The Moscow Committee under the leadership of Rykov, Nogin and others followed suit. Lenin's own theory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution formulated by him on the eve of the 1905 Revolution was used as an argument against his views on the nature of the 1917 Revolution.

To convince the Party and through it the Russian proletarian masses of the correctness of the analysis and tactics which he proposed was obviously Lenin's major and immediate task. Within two weeks, the delegates at the Petrograd City Conference of the Party were ready to accept his views and use them as a basis for their decisions.

The following week the National Conference took place with 151 delegates attending and representing about 80,000 members enrolled in Bolshevik organisations throughout the country. Although the leading opponents still held to their views, which they presented fully to the delegates, Lenin's estimate of the moving forces of the revolution and the tasks of the revolutionary proletarian party triumphed and became the position of the Party.

History worked for Lenin. Every act of the Provisional Government, every policy enunciated by the vacillating leadership of the Soviet, every unfolding event gave substance and meaning to Lenin's contentions. When the National Conference met May 7-12 (April 24-29, *old calendar*), a marked turning point in the course of the revolution had already been registered by the events of May 3-4. The May First demonstration in Petrograd—the first May Day

after the overthrow of the Tsar—was a tremendous outpouring of masses, parading under revolutionary slogans. Foreign Minister Milyukov, spokesman of the victorious bourgeoisie, chose this day to declare to the Allied governments that the Provisional Government would carry on the war to a "decisive victory" and that it would live up to all agreements and promises. For the revolutionary masses this meant that the bourgeoisie would continue the war until the imperialist aims agreed upon by the Tsar's government had been realised. May 3-4 witnessed huge protest demonstrations of workers and soldiers against the Provisional Government which were attacked by a counter-demonstration of reactionary elements called into the streets by the political groupings supporting the Provisional Government and favouring the continuation of the war.

The nature of the Provisional Government, the existing class relations, the rôle of the petty bourgeoisie, the temper of the masses—all appeared in bold relief during the first week of May and served as practical illustrations as Lenin was making his reports to the National Conference. Lenin's "platform" (*The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, Little Lenin Library, Vol. 9), was the starting point for his own reports and the discussions which ensued. On only one question—the relation to the Zimmerwald Union—the Conference did not follow entirely Lenin's position; otherwise all the decisions of the Conference took as their basis Lenin's formulations outlined in his "platform."

Lenin delivered the main report on the political situation, with Kamenev making a co-report, presenting the views of the opposition. In addition, Lenin reported on the war, on the agrarian question and on the revision of the Party programme. He also made speeches on the national question, reported upon by Stalin; on the calling of an international Socialist Conference, reported upon by Nogin; on the situation in the International, reported upon by Zinoviev, as well as speeches in favour of resolutions on the political situation and the war. All Lenin's reports and speeches as well as the remarks at the opening and closing of the Conference are reproduced in this small volume.

As an introduction to the materials on the April Conference we are including an appeal issued to the workers after the Conference, and ostensibly written by Lenin. It epitomises the decisions of the Conference and represents the spirit of the victorious Lenin line of raising the revolution to a higher stage under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

The April Conference was a necessary landmark in the life of the Bolshevik Party and the course of the Russian Revolution. At this Conference Lenin's policies became the policies of the Party. Armed with them and under his continuous guidance the Bolshevik Party understood the nature of the revolution and found the road to its ultimate victory.

ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG.

THE APRIL CONFERENCE

ADDRESS TO WORKERS ON THE APRIL CONFERENCE

FELLOW WORKERS: The All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united under the Central Committee and commonly known as the party of "Bolsheviks," is over.

The conference adopted very important decisions on all the fundamental questions of the revolution, and we print below the full text of these decisions.

The revolution is going through a crisis. This was to be observed in the streets of Petrograd and Moscow on May 2-4. This has been recognised by the Provisional Government. It has also been recognised by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This is being confirmed again at the moment of this writing by the resignation of Guchkov.

The crisis of power, the crisis of the revolution, is not an accident. The Provisional Government is a government of landowners and capitalists who are bound up with Russian and Anglo-French capital and compelled to continue the imperialist war. But the soldiers are tired of the war, they realise ever more clearly that the war is being waged in the interests of the capitalists; they do not want the war. At the same time there moves upon Russia as well as upon the other countries the dreadful phantom of a terrible collapse, of hunger, of complete economic ruin.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies which has concluded a pact with the Provisional Government and which supports it, which supports the loan and consequently also the war, has also been driven into a blind alley. The Soviet is responsible for the Provisional Government and, seeing the hopelessness of the situation, has also entangled itself in this pact with the capitalist government.

At this great historical moment, when the whole future of the revolution is at stake, when the capitalists, driven to despair, can only think of shooting down the workers, our party comes out before the people and, in the decisions of its conference, tells them:

You must understand what classes are driving the revolution

forward. You must coolly consider their different aspirations. A capitalist cannot follow the same road as a worker. The petty proprietors cannot either completely entrust themselves to the capitalists or make up their mind at once to conclude a fraternal and close alliance with the workers. Only by being able to distinguish between these classes is it possible to find the true path of the revolution.

And the decisions of our conference on all the fundamental issues of the nation, draw a clear distinction between the interests of the different classes, show the complete impossibility of finding a way out of the blind alley by means of the policy of confidence in the capitalist government or by supporting it.

The situation is incredibly difficult. There is one and only one way out: the passing of the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other deputies throughout Russia, from top to bottom. Only provided the power is passed to the working class, and is supported by the majority of the peasants, can we hope for the speedy restoration of the confidence of the workers of the other countries, and for the mighty European revolution which will break the yoke of capital and smash the iron grip of the criminal slaughter of the peoples. Only if the power is passed to the working class, and is supported by a majority of the peasants, can we entertain the firm hope that all the labouring masses will give their full confidence to this power and will take up as one the self-sacrificing work of rebuilding the entire national life in the interests of the toilers, not in the interests of the capitalists and landowners. Without such self-sacrificing work, without a tremendous straining of efforts by all and sundry, without a firm determination to build life anew, without the strictest organisation and comradely discipline of all the workers and all the poorest peasants, no way out can be found.

The war has brought all of mankind to the brink of destruction. The capitalists have become embroiled in the war and are powerless to extricate themselves from it. The whole world is facing disaster.

Fellow-workers! The time is approaching when events will demand from you new and even greater heroism—heroism of millions and tens of millions—than was displayed in the glorious days of the February and March Revolution. Be prepared!

Be prepared and remember that while, together with the capitalists, you were able to win in a few days, by a mere outburst of

popular indignation, for the victory against the capitalists and over them more than that is needed. Such a victory, the seizure of power by the workers and poorest peasants, maintaining it, making good use of it, requires organisation, organisation and organisation.

Our party helps you in whatever way it can, and primarily in the way of clearly portraying for you the different positions of the different classes and their different forces. The decisions of our conference are devoted to this. Without such a clear understanding organisation is nothing. Without organisation no action by the millions, no success is possible.

Do not put any faith in words. Do not allow yourselves to be carried away by promises. Do not exaggerate your forces. Organise in every factory, in every regiment, in every company, in every block. Work over your organisation daily and hourly, work yourselves, do not entrust this work to any one. See to it that the work should be such that complete confidence of the masses in the advanced workers should be formed gradually, firmly, indestructibly. This is the fundamental essence of all the decisions of our conference. This is the chief lesson of the entire progress of the revolution. This is the only guarantee of success.

Fellow-workers! We summon you to hard, earnest, tireless work, welding together the class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat of all countries. This road and this road alone leads to the way out, to the salvation of mankind from the horrors of war, from the yoke of capital.

First published in a supplement to *Soldatskaya Pravda*, No. 13, May 16, 1917.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE ON MAY 7, 1917

COMRADES: In the midst of the Russian Revolution and a developing international revolution, we have assembled here as the first conference of the proletarian party. The time is approaching when the assertion of the founders of scientific Socialism, as well as the unanimous forecast of the Socialists gathered at the Basle Congress, to the effect that World War would inevitably lead to revolution is being proven correct everywhere.

In the nineteenth century Marx and Engels, observing the proletarian movement in various countries and analysing the possible prospects for a social revolution, repeatedly asserted that the roles would, in general, be distributed among the various countries in proportion to, and in accord with, the national historic peculiarities of each of them. Briefly formulated, they expressed their idea in this way: The French worker will begin, the German will finish.

The great honour of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. The Russian proletariat must not forget, however, that its movement and revolution are only part of a worldwide revolutionary proletarian movement, which in Germany, for example, is gaining momentum with every passing day. Only from this angle can we define our tasks.

I declare the All-Russian Conference open. The election of a Presidium is in order.

REPORT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

COMRADES: In evaluating the present moment I am forced to deal with an exceedingly broad subject. To my mind, this subject falls into three parts: first, the estimate of the political situation proper, here in Russia, our relation to the government and to the dual power that has come into existence; second, our stand on the war; third,

the international situation of the working-class movement, a situation which has put the workers of the world face to face with a Socialist revolution.

Some of the points require, I think, only brief discussion. Besides, I am going to offer to this Conference a draft of a resolution covering all these questions. But I may as well tell you that because of the extreme lack of forces at our disposal, as well as because of the political crisis that had been created here, in Petrograd, we were unable either to have preliminary discussions of the resolution, or to communicate it in advance to the local comrades. I repeat, then, these are only tentative projects, calculated to lighten the labour of the commission and to enable it to concentrate on a few of the most essential questions.

I begin with the first question. If I am not mistaken, the Moscow Conference adopted the same resolution as the Petrograd City Conference (Voices: "With amendments"). I have not seen the amendments, and I cannot say anything about them. But since the Petrograd resolution was published in the *Soldatskaia Pravda,* I take it for granted, if there are no objections, that it is known to everybody here. I submit this resolution, as a tentative one, to the present All-Russian Conference.

The majority of the parties in the petty-bourgeois bloc dominating the Petrograd Soviet picture our policy, as distinguished from their own, as a rapid-fire policy. What really distinguishes our policy is the fact that we demand above everything else a precise class characterisation of current events. The fundamental sin of the petty-bourgeois bloc is that it resorts to phrases to conceal from the people the truth about the class character of the government.

If the Moscow comrades have any amendments to make, they may read them now.

(*Reads the resolution of the Petrograd City Conference on the attitude toward the Provisional Government.*)

Whereas: (1) The Provisional Government, by its class character, is the organ of landowner and bourgeois domination; and,

Whereas: (2) The Provisional Government and the classes it represents are bound with indissoluble economic and political ties to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism; and,

Whereas: (3) The Provisional Government does not fully carry out even the programme which it has promulgated, and when it does, it is only because of the pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and, partly, the petty bourgeoisie; and,

Whereas: (4) The forces of the bourgeois and feudal counter-revolution,

now in the process of organisation, have already, under the cover of the Provisional Government, and with its obvious encouragement, launched an attack on revolutionary democracy; and,

Whereas: (5) The Provisional Government is postponing the calling of elections to the Constituent Assembly, is interfering with the general arming of the people, is opposing the transfer of the land to the people, is foisting upon it the landowner's way of settling the agrarian question, is blocking the introduction of an eight-hour workday, is condoning counter-revolutionary propaganda in the army by Guchkov and Co., is organising the high commanding officers of the army against the soldiers, etc. . . .

I have read the first part of the resolution containing a class characterisation of the Provisional Government. As far as one is able to judge from the text of the resolution, the differences between this and the resolution of the Moscow comrades are hardly essential. Still, the general characterisation of the Provisional Government as counter-revolutionary is, in my opinion, incorrect. If we speak in general, we must specify which revolution we mean. From the standpoint of the bourgeois revolution, this cannot be said; for the bourgeois revolution has already been completed. From the standpoint of the proletarian and peasant revolution, such a statement is premature, for we cannot at all be sure that the peasants will necessarily advance farther than the bourgeoisie. To express our confidence in the peasantry, particularly now that it has turned to imperialism and defencism, *i. e.*, to supporting the war, is in my judgment unsound. At the present moment the peasantry has entered into a number of agreements with the Cadets.* That is why I regard this point in the Moscow resolution as politically incorrect. We want the peasants to advance farther than the bourgeoisie, we want them to take the land from the landowners, but so far we can say nothing definite about their future conduct.

We carefully avoid the words "revolutionary democracy." When we speak of a government attack, we may use this expression. At the present moment, however, this expression covers a huge lie, for it is very difficult to distinguish the classes that have become blended in this chaos. Our task is to free those that are trailing behind. The Soviets are important for us not as a form; rather is it important to see what classes the Soviets represent. We must therefore do a great deal of work to clarify the class consciousness of the proletariat. . . .

(*Resumes the reading of the resolution.*)

* Abbreviated name of the Constitutional Democratic Party, the party of the bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

Whereas: (6) The government, while doing this, is relying at the present moment on the confidence and, to a certain extent, on the actual consent of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which now comprises an undoubted majority of workers and soldiers, *i. e.*, peasants; and,

Whereas: (7) Each step made by the Provisional Government, both in the realm of its domestic and foreign policies, is bound to open the eyes not only of the city and village proletarians and semi-proletarians, but also of the petty bourgeoisie, to the real nature of this government;

The Conference resolves that:

(1) In order to accomplish the passing of the state power into the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies or of other organs that are the direct expression of the will of the people, it is necessary to do extensive work in clarifying proletarian class consciousness and in uniting the city and village proletarians against petty-bourgeois vacillation, for it is only work of this nature that will assure the successful advance of the whole revolutionary people; and that

(2) Such work requires comprehensive activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, an increase in the number of Soviets, an increase in their power, a welding together, within the Soviets, of the proletarian internationalist groups of our party; and

(3) We must organise more effectively our Social-Democratic forces, in order that we may direct the new wave of the revolutionary movement under the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

Here is the crux of our policy. The whole petty bourgeoisie is wavering at present and trying to conceal this wavering under the phrase "revolutionary democracy." We must contrast these waverings with a proletarian line. The counter-revolutionists wish to frustrate it through premature action. Our task is to increase the number of Soviets, to increase their strength, to solidify the unity of our party.

The Moscow comrades have added to Point 3 the demand for control. This control is represented by Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, and other leaders of the petty-bourgeois bloc. Control without power is one of the emptiest phrases. How can I control England? To control her, one must seize her fleet. I can see how the uneducated mass of workers and soldiers may naïvely and unintelligently believe in control. It is sufficient, however, to ponder a while over the fundamental aspects of control to realise that such a belief constitutes a complete abandonment of the basic principles of class-struggle. What is control? If I write a scrap of paper, a resolution, they will write a counter-resolution. To control, one must have power. If the broad masses in the petty-bourgeois bloc do not understand this, we must have the patience to explain it to them, but under no circumstances must we tell them an untruth. If, however, I obscure this fundamental issue by merely speaking

of control, then I am guilty of telling an untruth and am playing into the hands of the capitalists and the imperialists. "You may do all the controlling you want, but it is we who have the guns. We'll let you be satisfied with your control," they say. They know that at the present moment the people cannot be denied anything. Control without power is a petty-bourgeois phrase that blocks the march and development of the Russian Revolution. That is why I object to the third point of the Moscow comrades.

As regards the unique tangle of two powers, whereby the Provisional Government, devoid of power, guns, soldiers, and armed masses of people, leans on the Soviets, and whereby the Soviets, relying thus far on promises, are carrying out a policy of sustaining those promises—well, if you insist on participating in this game, you are doomed to failure. It is not for us to take part in this game. We shall keep up our work of explaining to the proletariat the unsoundness of such a policy, and day by day life itself will prove the correctness of our position. So far we are in the minority; the masses do not trust us yet. We can wait; they will side with us when the Government reveals its true nature. The vacillation of the government may repel them, then they will rush to our side; then, taking account of the new correlation of forces, we shall say: Our time has come.

I now pass on to the question of war. It is this question that actually united us, when we took a stand against the Loan. It is the attitude on this question that showed immediately and clearly the alignment of political forces. As the *Riech* has stated, everybody, except the *Yedinstvo*, is wavering; the petty-bourgeois mass is all for the Loan—with reservations. The capitalists make a sour face, they snickeringly pocket the resolution, saying: "You may do the talking, but we will do the acting." All those now voting for the Loan are known as social-chauvinists the world over.

I will now proceed to read the resolution on the war. It consists of three parts: First, characterisation of the war from the standpoint of its class significance; second, the revolutionary defencism of the masses, something that cannot be found in any country; third, how to end the war.

Many of us, myself included, have had occasion to address the people, particularly the soldiers, and it seems to me that even when everything is explained to them from the point of view of class interests, there is still one thing in our position that they cannot

fully grasp, namely, in what way we intend to finish the war, in what way we think it possible to bring the war to an end. The masses are in a maze of misapprehension, there is an absolute lack of understanding as to our stand, that is why we must be particularly clear in this case.

(*Reads the draft of the resolution on the war.*)

The present war is, on the part of both belligerent groups, an imperialist war, *i. e.*, it is waged by capitalists for domination over the world, for the division of spoils by capitalists, for profitable markets for finance and bank capital, and for the strangulation of weak nationalities.

The passing of state power in Russia from Nicholas II to the government of Guchkov, Lvov and others, to the government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter this class character and meaning of Russia's participation in the war.

The fact that the new government is carrying on the same imperialist, *i. e.*, grabbing, predatory war, became particularly apparent when the government not only failed to publish the secret treaties concluded between the late Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of England, France, etc., but formally confirmed these treaties. This was done without consulting the will of the people and with the clear purpose of deceiving it, for it is well known that the treaties concluded by the late Tsar are predatory through and through, that they promise the Russian capitalists freedom to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc.

For this reason a proletarian party can support neither the present war, nor the present government, nor its loans, no matter in what glowing terms the loans may be spoken of, unless our party break completely with internationalism, *i. e.*, with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all lands in their struggle against the yoke of capital.

Nor can confidence be placed in the promise of the present government to renounce annexations, *i. e.*, conquest of foreign countries, or in the promise to renounce forcible retention within the confines of Russia of this or that nationality.

For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound by thousands of threads of Russian and Anglo-French bank capital, and intent on protecting the interests of capital, cannot renounce annexations in the present war without at the same time ceasing to be capitalists, without renouncing the profits on the billions invested in loans, in concessions, in war industries, etc. And, in the second place, the new government, having renounced annexations in order to deceive the people, declared through Miliukov (Moscow, April 22, 1917), that it had no intentions of renouncing annexations. Finally, according to an exposé in the *Dielo Naroda*, a newspaper published with the collaboration of Minister Kerensky, Miliukov has not even sent abroad his statement concerning the renunciation of annexations.

In warning the people against the empty promises of the capitalists, the conference therefore declares that it is necessary to distinguish sharply between a renunciation of annexations in words, and a renunciation of annexations in deed, *i. e.*, the immediate publication of all the secret, predatory treaties, of all notes and documents pertaining to foreign policy, and the taking of immediate steps to free all the peoples which the capitalist class, continuing the disgraceful policy of the late Tsar Nicholas II, oppresses, forcibly keeps bound to Russia, or keeps in a state of subjection.

The second half of this part of the resolution deals with the promises made by the government. Perhaps for a Marxist this part would be superfluous; for the people, however, it is important. We therefore ought to add our reason why we have no faith in those promises, why we should not trust the government. The present government's promises to abandon its imperialist policy deserve no credence. Our policy in this case should not be merely to demand that the government publish the treaties. This would be a vain hope. To demand this of a capitalist government would be equivalent to demanding that it expose commercial swindling. Since we maintain that it is necessary to renounce annexations and indemnities, we ought to indicate how this can be done; and if we are asked who can do it, our answer is that since the remedy is by its very nature a revolutionary one, it is only the revolutionary proletariat that can apply it. Otherwise these promises will remain empty pledges and wishes whereby the capitalists deceive the people.

(*Continues reading the draft of the resolution.*)

The so-called "revolutionary defencism" which in Russia has permeated all the Narodnik parties (People's Socialists, Trudoviks, Socialists-Revolutionists), as well as the opportunist party of the Social-Democratic Mensheviks (O. C., Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the unaffiliated revolutionists, represents, by its class character, on the one hand the interests and the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie, the petty proprietors, and the wealthier peasants, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples; on the other hand, it is the outcome of the deception of the masses by the capitalists, who refuse to make public the secret treaties and who try to get off with promises and rhetoric.

We are bound to admit that a very great number among the "revolutionary defencists" are honest, *i. e.*, they are honestly opposed to annexations, to conquests, to doing violence to weak peoples; they are honestly striving to attain a democratic and non-oppressive peace among all the belligerents. This cannot be denied for the reason that the class position of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians of city and village (*i. e.*, of the people who earn their livelihood, wholly or partly, by selling their labour power to the capitalists) renders these classes indifferent to the profits of the capitalists.

Therefore, the conference, recognising any concessions to "revolutionary defencism" as absolutely not permissible and as actually signifying a complete break with internationalism and Socialism, declares at the same time that so long as the Russian capitalists and their Provisional Government confine themselves to threats of violence against the people (for example, Guchkov's notorious decree threatening the soldiers with punishment for arbitrary removal of superiors), as long as the capitalists have not started the use of violence against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Workers', and other Deputies which organise themselves freely, elect and remove all public officers freely,—so long will our party preach general abstention from violence, at the same time fighting solely by means of comradely persuasion against the deep and fatal error of "revolutionary defencism," emphasising the

truth that the attitude of uncritical confidence in the government of the capitalists, the bitterest enemies of peace and Socialism, is, in present-day Russia, the greatest obstacle to a speedy conclusion of the war.

A section of the petty bourgeoisie is interested, no doubt, in this policy of the capitalists. This is the reason why the proletarian party at present must not place any hopes on the community of interests of the proletariat and the peasantry. We are striving to win the peasantry over to our side; the peasantry, however, is more or less consciously on the side of the capitalists.

We have no doubt that, as a class, the proletariat and semi-proletariat are not interested in the war. They are influenced by tradition and deception. They still lack political experience. Therefore, our task is patient explaining. Our principles remain intact, we do not make the slightest compromise; yet we cannot approach those masses as we approach the social-chauvinists. Those elements of our population have never been Socialists, they have not the slightest conception of Socialism, they are just awakening to political life. But their class-consciousness is growing and broadening with extraordinary rapidity. One must know how to approach them with explanations, and this is now the most difficult task, particularly for a party that but yesterday was underground.

Some may ask: Have we not repudiated our own principles? We have been advocating the turning of the imperialist war into civil war, and now we have reversed ourselves. We must bear in mind, however, that the first civil war in Russia has come to an end; we are now advancing toward the second war,—the war between imperialism and the armed people. In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Miliukov and Guchkov have not resorted to violence, this civil war turns for us into peaceful, extensive, and patient class propaganda. To speak of civil war before people have come to realise the need of it, is undoubtedly to fall into Blanquism.* We are for civil war, but for civil war waged by a class-conscious proletariat. Only he can be overthrown who is known to the people as a despot. There are no despots in Russia at the present moment; it is the soldiers and not the capitalists who are in possession of the

* The teachings of the French revolutionist Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881) favouring the overthrow of the ruling power through secret plots of a few revolutionists rather than through preparation and organisation of the masses led by a revolutionary party.—*Ed.*

guns and cannons; the capitalists are in power not by force but by deception, and to speak of violence now is pure nonsense. One must know how to look from the Marxist standpoint which says that the imperialist war will turn into civil war as a result of objective conditions, and not as a result of subjective desires. For the time being we lay aside this slogan, but only for the time being. It is the soldiers and the workers who are in possession of the arms now, not the capitalists. So long as the government has not started fighting, our propaganda is peaceful.

The government would like to see us make the first reckless step towards decisive action, as this would be to its advantage. It is exasperated because our party has advanced the slogan of peaceful demonstration. We must not cede one iota of our principles to the watchfully waiting petty bourgeoisie. The proletarian party would be guilty of the most grievous error if it shaped its policy on the basis of subjective desires where organisation is required. We cannot assert that the majority is with us; in this case our motto should be: caution, caution, caution. To base our proletarian policy on overconfidence means to condemn it to failure.

The third point deals with the question of how to end the war. The Marxian point of view is well known, the difficulty is how to present this view to the masses in the clearest form possible. We are not pacifists, and we cannot repudiate a revolutionary war. Wherein does a revolutionary war differ from a capitalist war? The difference is, above all, a class difference: Which class is interested in the war? What policy does the interested class pursue in that war? . . . In approaching the masses, we must offer concrete answers to all questions. First, then, how can one distinguish between a revolutionary war and a capitalist war? The rank and file of the masses do not grasp the distinction, do not realise that there is here a class distinction. Our explanations must not be confined to theories only, we must demonstrate in practice that we shall wage a really revolutionary war when the proletariat is in power. Putting the matter thus, we offer, I think, the clearest possible answer to the questions as to the nature of the war and of those who are carrying it on.

The *Pravda* has published the draft of an appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries. Information has been reaching us concerning fraternisation on the front, but this fraternisation is as yet more or less elemental. What it lacks is a conscious political

idea. The soldiers have come to feel instinctively that action must come from the bottom; their class instinct of people in a revolutionary mood made them feel that this was the only right path to follow. For a revolution, however, this is insufficient. We must supply a clear-cut political issue. In order to make an end of this war, all power must pass to the revolutionary class. I would suggest that an appeal to the soldiers of all the warring countries be drawn up in the name of the conference and published in all the languages. If, instead of all these current phrases about peace conferences, fifty per cent of whose members are either secret or avowed agents of imperialist governments, we send out this appeal, it will bring us to our goal a thousand times sooner than all those peace conferences. We refuse to have any dealings with the German Plekhanovs. When we were crossing Germany, those gentlemen, the social-chauvinists, the German Plekhanovs, were clambering into our cars, but we told them that we would not allow a single one of them to enter our car, and that if any of them dared to enter they would not escape without a terrific scandal. Had a man like Karl Liebknecht been permitted to come to see us, we would have certainly talked matters over with him. When we issue our appeal to the toilers of all the countries, when we offer a definite answer to the question as to how to end the war, when the soldiers read our answer suggesting a political way out of this war, then fraternisation will make a tremendous stride forward. This we must do in order to elevate fraternisation from an instinctive revulsion against war to a clear political understanding as to how to get out of it.

I now pass to the third question, *i. e.*, the analysis of the present moment with reference to the position of the international labour movement and that of international capitalism. When a Marxist discusses imperialism he realises the utter absurdity of dwelling on conditions in one single country, for he knows that all capitalist countries are closely bound together. During the present war this bond has grown immeasurably stronger. All humanity is kneaded into one bloody lump, and no one separate nation can disentangle itself from it. Though there are more and less advanced countries, the present war has bound all of them to each other by so many threads, that it appears senseless and impossible for any one separate country to strive to escape this tangle.

We are all agreed that power should be in the hands of Soviets

of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But what can and what must they do if power passes to them, *i. e.*, if it is in the hands of proletarians and semi-proletarians? We are confronted with an involved and difficult problem. Indeed, with regard to the transfer of power, we are aware of one danger that has played a disastrous rôle in former revolutions, namely, the revolutionary class not knowing what to do with power after it has gained it. History offers many examples of revolutions that failed because of this. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldier' Deputies, spreading the network of their organisation over all of Russia, are at this moment the central force of the revolution; it seems to me, however, that we have not sufficiently studied or understood them. Should they seize power, they would constitute a state not in the ordinary sense of that word. The world has never yet seen such a state functioning for any considerable length of time, but the proletarian movement of the world has been approaching such a state. That state would be constructed on the pattern of the Paris Commune. Such power is a dictatorship, *i. e.*, it rests not on the law, not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct and open force. Force is the instrument of power. How, then, will the Soviets apply this power? Will they revert to the old way of governing by police? Will they carry on the government by means of the old organs of power? This they cannot do, I think. At any rate, they will be faced with the immediate task of creating a state that is not bourgeois. Among Bolsheviks, I have compared this state to the Paris Commune in the sense that the latter had destroyed the old administrative organs and had replaced them by perfectly new ones that were direct and immediate organs of the workers. I am blamed for using a word now exceedingly frightening to the capitalists, for they have begun to interpret it as a desire for the immediate introduction of Socialism. I have used it, however, only in the sense of replacing old organs by new proletarian organs. Marx regarded that as the greatest advance of the proletarian movement of the world. To us the question of the social tasks of the proletariat is of enormous practical importance, first, because we are at the present moment bound up with all the other countries, and are unable to free ourselves from this tangle, that is to say, the proletariat will either free itself as a whole or it will be crushed; secondly, the existence of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is an established fact. No one doubts that they have spread over the whole of Russia, that they are a state

power and that there can be no other power. If this is so, then we ought to make clear to ourselves how the Soviets are likely to use their power. It is asserted that the power of the Soviets is the same as in France or America, but there is nothing like it in those countries; such a direct power does not exist there.

The resolution on the political situation consists of three parts. The first defines the objective situation created by the imperialist war, and the situation in which world capitalism finds itself; the second deals with the present state of the international proletarian movement; the third deals with the tasks of the Russian workers in case they assume power. In the first part I formulate the conclusion that during the present war capitalism has developed even more than before the war. It is now in control of entire realms of production. As early as in 1891, *i. e.*, twenty-seven years ago, when the Germans adopted the Erfurt programme.* Engels maintained that capitalism could not be regarded any longer as being planless. This idea has become obsolete; once there are trusts, planlessness disappears. It is particularly in the twentieth century that capitalism has made gigantic strides, and the war has accomplished what could not otherwise have been accomplished in twenty-five years. Nationalisation of industry has advanced not only in Germany, but also in England. Monopoly, in general, has evolved into state monopoly.

General conditions show that the war has accelerated the development of capitalism; it advanced from capitalism to imperialism; from monopoly to nationalisation. All this made the Socialist revolution closer and created the objective conditions for it. Thus the course of the war has brought the Socialist revolution nearer to us.

Before the war England was the freest country in the world,—a point always stressed by the politicians of our Cadet type. There was freedom in England, because there was no revolutionary movement there. But the war has changed everything. In a country where for decades there was not a single instance of interference with the Socialist press, a typically tsarist censorship was established, and English prisons became crowded with Socialists. For centuries the capitalists of England acquired the habit of ruling the people without the use of force, and if they now resort to

* The programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted at its congress at Erfurt, in 1891.—*Ed.*

force, it shows that they have come to feel that the revolutionary movement is growing, and that they cannot do otherwise. When we pointed out that Liebknecht represented the masses, in spite of the fact that there were a hundred German Plekhanovs to one Liebknecht, we were told that that was a Utopia, an illusion. Yet, any one who visited workingmen's meetings abroad knows that the sympathy of the masses for Liebknecht is an undeniable fact. His bitterest opponents had to practice cunning when they faced the masses. When they could not pretend to be his friends, they said nothing, they did not dare to say anything against him. Now the cause has advanced still farther. We are now witnessing mass strikes, and there is fraternisation at the front. Prophecies in this respect would be dangerously misleading; we cannot fail to notice, however, that sympathy with the International is growing, that a revolutionary fermentation is beginning in the German army. These facts tend to indicate that revolution in Germany is rising.

What, then, are the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat? The main flaw, the main error, in all Socialist discussion is that this question is put in too general a form,—the transition to Socialism. What we should discuss are concrete steps and measures. Some of these are ripe, some are not. We are now in the midst of a transition period. Clearly, we have brought to the fore new forms, forms different from those to be found in bourgeois states. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are a form of state without any parallel. It is a form that represents the first steps toward Socialism, and is inevitable as the first stage in the development of a Socialist society. This is a fact of decisive importance. The Russian Revolution has created the Soviets. No bourgeois country in the world has or can have such state institutions. No Socialist revolution can function with any other state power. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies must seize power not for the purpose of building an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of introducing Socialism immediately. The latter could not be accomplished. What, then, is the purpose? They must seize power in order to take the first concrete steps towards introducing Socialism, steps that can and should be made. In this case fear is the greatest enemy. The masses should be convinced that these steps must be taken immediately, that otherwise the power of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would be devoid of meaning, and would offer nothing to the people.

I shall now attempt to answer the question as to what concrete measures we may propose to the people that would not be contrary to our Marxist conviction.

Why do we wish that power should pass to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The first thing the Soviets must accomplish is the nationalisation of the land. Nationalisation is being spoken of by all the peoples. Some say it is a most utopian measure, still, everybody comes to regard it as inevitable, because land ownership in Russia is so complicated that there is no other solution except the removal of all boundary lines and the making of all land the property of the state. Private ownership of land must be abolished. This is our first task, because the majority of the people are for it. To accomplish this, we need the Soviets. This measure cannot be carried out by means of the old government bureaucracy.

The second measure. We cannot stand for the "introduction" of Socialism—this would be sheer nonsense. We must *preach* Socialism. The majority of the population in Russia consists of peasants, of petty proprietors, who cannot even conceive of Socialism. But what objections can they have to a bank's being established in each village, to enable them to improve their husbandry? They can have nothing against such a measure. We must make propaganda in favour of these practical measures among the peasants, we must make the peasants realise that they are needed.

Quite another thing is the sugar syndicate. Here our proposal must be of immediate practicability: these fully developed syndicates must be taken over by the state. If the Soviets wish to assume power, it is only for such ends. There is no other reason why the Soviets should assume power. The matter may be stated thus: either the Soviets develop, or they die an ignominious death, like the Paris Commune. For a bourgeois republic we need no Soviets; Cadets will do.

I shall conclude by referring to the speech that made the strongest impression on me. I heard a coal miner deliver a remarkable speech. Without using a single bookish word, he told how they had made the revolution. Those miners were not concerned with the question as to whether or not they should have a president. They seized the mine, and the important question to them was how to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, of which there was a scarcity.

And the miners again agreed on the method of obtaining it. Now this is a real programme of the revolution, not derived from books. This is a real seizure of power locally. Nowhere in Russia has the bourgeoisie assumed such a definite shape as it has in Petrograd. Here the capitalists have the power in their hands. But throughout the country, the peasants, without assigning themselves special Socialist tasks, are carrying out purely practical measures. It is this programme of the revolutionary movement that indicates, I think, the true path of the revolution. These measures, we hold, must be carried out with the greatest caution and circumspection. But it is only these measures that are really worth while, it is only they that point the way forward; without them there is no escape. Without them the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will be dispersed, will die an ignominious death. But if the revolutionary proletariat should actually win power, it will be solely in order to advance. To advance, however, means to take definite steps. Words, alone, won't get us out of the war. The complete success of these steps is possible only through a world revolution, when the revolution smothers the war, when the workers of the world support the revolution. The seizure of power is, therefore, the only practical measure,—this is the only way out.

CONCLUDING REMARKS IN CONNECTION WITH THE REPORT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

COMRADE KAMENEV was cleverly riding his hobby when he spoke of adventurousness. We must dwell on it for a moment. Comrade Kamenev is convinced that he is right when he asserts that our opposition to the slogan, "Down with the Provisional Government," betrayed vacillation. I agree with him; there certainly have been deviations from a staightforward revolutionary policy; these deviations must be avoided in the future. I think that our differences with Comrade Kamenev are not very grave. Indeed, by agreeing with us, he has changed his position. Wherein were we adventurers? It was in the attempt to resort to forcible measures. We did not know the extent to which the masses had swung to our side during that troublous moment. Had it swung powerfully, it would have been an entirely different matter. We advocated peaceful demonstrations. But several comrades from the Petrograd Committee issued an entirely different slogan. We decided against

that slogan, but had no time to prevent its use; the masses followed the slogan of the Petrograd Committee. We say that the slogan, "Down with the Provisional Government," is an adventurer's slogan; that the government cannot as yet be overthrown. That is why we have advocated peaceful demonstrations. All we wanted was a peaceful reconnoitering of the enemy's forces; we did not want to give battle. The Petrograd Committee, however, turned a trifle to the Left. In a case of this sort, such a step was a grave crime. Our organisational apparatus proved too weak; not all are carrying out our instructions. Together with the correct slogan, "Long Live the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies," there was the incorrect slogan, "Down with the Provisional Government." In time of action, the deviation to the Left was wrong. We regard this as the greatest crime, as disorganisation. Had we deliberately allowed such an act, we would not have remained in the Central Committee for one moment. It happened because of the imperfection of the organisational apparatus. Yes, our organisation had flaws. Our task is to improve the organisation.

The Mensheviks and Co. tear the word "adventurers" to tatters. But they had no organisation and no policy at all. We have both an organisation and a policy.

While the bourgeoisie was mobilising all its forces, while the centre was in hiding, we organised a peaceful demonstration. We were the only ones who had a political line. Were there any errors committed? Certainly there were. Only he who does nothing commits no errors. As for a perfect organisation, this is a difficult matter.

Now about control.

We are in full accord with Comrade Kamenev, except on the question of control. He views control as a political act. Subjectively, however, he understands this word better than Chkheidze and the others. We do not accept control. People tell us that we have isolated ourselves, that by letting loose a torrent of terrible Communist phrases we have frightened the bourgeoisie into a fit. So be it! Still, it was not this that isolated us. It was the Loan question that caused our isolation. It was on this question that we found ourselves in the minority. Yes, we are in the minority. Well, what of it? To be a Socialist while chauvinism is raging all around means to be in the minority. To be in the majority means to be a chauvinist. At the present moment the peasant together with Miliukov is getting the best of Socialism by means of the

Loan. The peasant follows Miliukov and Guchkov. This is a fact. The bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the peasantry is an old formula.

The peasant is chauvinistic. We must separate the proletariat, we must form a distinct proletarian party, if we wish to draw the peasant to the revolution. To draw the peasant now means to surrender to the mercies of Miliukov.

The Provisional Government must be overthrown, but not now, and not in the ordinary way. We agree with Comrade Kamenev. But we must explain. It is this word that nettles Comrade Kamenev. But that, nevertheless, is the only thing we can do.

Comrade Rykov says that Socialism must first come from other countries with greater industrial development. But this is not so. It is hard to tell who will begin and who will end. This is not Marxism, but a parody on Marxism.

Marx said that France would begin and that Germany would finish. But it turned out that the Russian proletariat achieved more than anybody else. . . .

Had we said: "No Tsar, but a Dictatorship of the Proletariat"—it would have meant a leap over the petty bourgeoisie. What we are saying, however, is this: help the revolution through the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. We must not degenerate into reformism. We are waging this struggle in order that we may emerge the victors, not the vanquished. At worst we count on partial success. If we suffer defeat, we shall have partial success. We shall get reforms. Reforms are an auxiliary means in the class struggle.

Furthermore, Comrade Rykov says that there is no period of transition from capitalism to Socialism. This is wrong and is a break with Marxism.

The policy which we have mapped out is sound. In the future we shall make every effort to strengthen our organisation to such an extent that there should be no Petrograd Committeemen disobeying the Central Committee. We are growing—this is as it should be with a real party.

SPEECH IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION

In the resolution on the political situation, it would be wrong to speak only of Russian conditions. The war has bound us so indis-

solubly that we would be guilty of a grave error, if we ignored the whole of international relations.

The main subject treated in this resolution is the tasks with which the Russian proletariat may be confronted in case the world movement brings it face to face with a social revolution.

> The objective conditions for a Socialist revolution that undoubtedly existed even before the war in the more developed and advanced countries, have been and are ripening with tremendous rapidity as a result of the war. The crowding out and ruin of small and medium-sized economic enterprises is proceeding at an accelerating pace. The concentration and internationalisation of capital is making gigantic strides. Monopoly capitalism is changing into state monopoly capitalism. Social regulation of production and distribution is, under the pressure of circumstances, being introduced in many countries. Some are introducing universal labour service.

Present economic conditions have caused the disappearance of planless capitalism. Up to the war there were monopolies, trusts, syndicates; since the war we have had state monopoly. Universal labour service is something new, something that constitutes part of a Socialist whole,—this is often overlooked by those who fear to face present conditions frankly.

The central point of the first part of the resolution is an analysis of conditions of capitalist economy throughout the world. It is noteworthy that twenty-seven years ago Engels pointed out that to characterise capitalism as something distinguished by its planlessness, means to overlook the rôle played by trusts, and is unsatisfactory. Engels' criticism was that "when we come to the trust, then planlessness disappears," though there is capitalism. This remark of Engels is particularly appropriate now, when we have a military state, when we have state-monopoly capitalism. The introduction of planning into industry keeps the workers enslaved none the less, though it enables the capitalists to gather in their profits in a more planful way. We now witness the metamorphosis of capitalism into a higher, a regulated form of capitalism.

The second part of the resolution requires no explanations.

The third part requires more detailed comment.

> The proletariat of Russia, operating in one of the most backward countries in Europe, surrounded by a vast petty-peasant population, cannot make its aim the immediate realisation of a Socialist transformation.
>
> Yet it would be a grave error to infer from the foregoing that the proletariat must support the bourgeoisie, or that we must keep our activities within the boundaries acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie, or that the proletariat must renounce its leading rôle in the matter of explaining to the people the im-

perative urgency of a number of measures that are ripe to be put into practice and that lead to Socialism. Such inference would be in practice equivalent to going over to the side of the bourgeoisie.

From the first premise it is customary to make the following conclusion: "Russia is a backward country, a peasant, a petty-bourgeois country, and that is why it is futile to speak of a social revolution there." One forgets, however, that the war has placed us in extraordinary circumstances, and that alongside of the petty bourgeoisie we have large-scale capital. But what should the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies do when it gets into power? Should it turn to the side of the bourgeoisie? Our answer is that the working class will continue the class struggle.

What is possible and what is imperative with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in power?

First of all, the nationalisation of the land. The nationalisation of the land is a bourgeois measure, it does not exclude capitalism, nor does capitalism exclude it. Nationalisation, however, is bound to deal a heavy blow to the petty proprietors. Further:

> . . . establishment of government control over all the banks which are to be united into a single central bank, also control over insurance companies and the larger capitalist syndicates (for example, the sugar syndicate, the coal syndicate, the metal syndicate, etc.), all this to be accompanied by a change to a more just and progressive taxation of incomes and property. Economic conditions are ripe for such measures. From the technical point of view they can be carried out immediately. From the political point of view they are likely to get the support of the overwhelming majority of peasants, who in every respect will gain by such reforms.

This point provoked discussion. I already had occasion to speak of this in the *Pravda* in connection with Plekhanov's articles. "When they talk of the impossibility of Socialism," I wrote, "they try to speak of the latter in a way most advantageous to themselves, they represent it vaguely, indefinitely, as some sort of a jump." Kautsky himself wrote: "No Socialist speaks of the abolition of private property in the case of the peasants." But does that mean that existing large-scale capital must make it unnecessary for the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to control production, to control the sugar-manufacturers' syndicate, etc.? This measure is not Socialism,—it is a transitional measure, but the carrying out of such measures together with the existence of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies will bring about a situation where Russia stands with one foot in Socialism,—we say with one foot because

the peasant majority is in control of the other economic part of the country. It cannot be denied that economically we are ripe for a change. To carry out this change politically, we must get the majority, and the majority consists of peasants who are naturally interested in such changes. Whether they will prove sufficiently organised is another matter; we are not responsible for them.

An old and oft-repeated objection to Socialism is that Socialism means "barracks for the masses," "bureaucratic rigidity in ruling the masses." The question of Socialism should be viewed now in a different and new light. We must take it out of the realm of the nebulous and place it in the realm of practical measures: nationalisation of land, control over syndicates, etc.

> All the measures just indicated, as well as others of the same nature, could and should be not merely discussed and prepared so that they might be carried out on a national scale in case the proletarians and semi-proletarians gained power, but, whenever opportunity presents itself, should be carried into life immediately by local revolutionary organs of people's power.
>
> In carrying out the above measures, it is necessary to exercise extreme circumspection and caution, and to win a solid majority of the population as well as its intelligent conviction that the country is ready for the practical introduction of this or that measure, but it is in this direction that we must rivet the attention and the efforts of the class-conscious vanguard of the proletarian masses, who are in duty bound to help the peasant masses find an escape from the present economic chaos.

"This is a bourgeois revolution, it is therefore useless to speak of Socialism," say our opponents. But we say just the reverse: "Since the bourgeoisie cannot find a way out of the present situation, the revolution is bound to go on." We must not confine ourselves to democratic phrases, we must make the situation clear to the masses, we must indicate to them a series of practical measures: They must take over the syndicates and must control them through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, etc. When all such measures are carried out, Russia will stand with one foot in Socialism. Our economic programme must indicate a way to escape economic chaos,—this is what should guide our actions.

SPEECH IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE WAR

COMRADES, the first draft of the resolution relating to the war was read by me at the city conference. Because of the crisis that had absorbed the attention and energy of all our comrades, we had

been unable to amend the draft. But since yesterday the commission has been working on it, and the results, it appears, are satisfactory: the resolution has been changed, shortened and improved.

I wish to say a few words concerning the structure of the resolution. It consists of three parts. The first is devoted to a class analysis of the war; it also contains a statement of principles upon which our party bases its distrust of all promises made by the Provisional Government, as well as its denial of confidence in that government. The second part deals with the question of revolutionary defencism as a vast mass movement which has united against us the overwhelming majority of the people. Our task is to make clear the class significance of this revolutionary defencism, its essence, the correlation of forces within it, and how to fight against it. The third part of the resolution deals with the question of how to end the war. This practical question, which is of supreme importance to our party, requires a detailed answer. We think that we have succeeded in meeting this requirement satisfactorily. The many articles on the war published in the *Pravda* and in the provincial newspapers (which reach us very irregularly, postal service being disorganised, and provincial papers reaching the Central Committee only occasionally) reveal a negative attitude toward the war and the Loan. I think that the vote against the Loan settled the question as to our opposition to revolutionary defencism. I think it is unnecessary to discuss this in greater detail.

The present war is, on the part of both belligerent groups, an imperialist war, *i. e.*, it is waged by the capitalists for the division of the benefits derived from the domination of the world, for markets, for finance (bank) capital, for the subjection of weak nationalities, etc.

The first and basic point is the question of the meaning of the war, a question of a general and political character, a question on which there is disagreement, a question which the capitalists and the social-chauvinists most carefully evade. This is the reason why we must consider it first in order and make an addition.

Each day of war enriches the financial and industrial bourgeoisie and impoverishes and saps the strength of the proletariat and the peasantry of all the belligerents, as well as of the neutral countries. In Russia, moreover, the prolongation of the war involves a grave danger to the conquests of the revolution and its further development.

The passing of state power, in Russia, into the hands of the Provisional Government, a government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the character and meaning of Russia's participation in the war.

The words I have just read to you are of great importance in our propaganda and agitation. Has the class character of the war changed? Could it change? Our reply is based on the fact that power has passed to the government of the landowners and the capitalists, the groups that prepared this war. We then pass on to one of the facts that reveals most clearly the character of the war. Class interests as expressed by the general policy carried on for decades by definite classes, are one thing; the obvious class character of the war is another.

This fact became particularly apparent when the new government not only failed to publish the secret treaties concluded between the late Tsar and the capitalist governments of England, France, etc., but even formally and without consulting the people, confirmed these secret treaties, which promised Russian capitalists freedom to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc. The concealment of these treaties from the people completely deceived them as to the true character of the war.

And so, I emphasize again, we are pointing out one particularly striking confirmation of our analysis of the character of the war. Even if there were no treaties at all, the character of the war would be the same, because capitalist groups can come to an agreement without any treaties. But the treaties exist; their meaning is self-evident; for the purposes of co-ordinating the work of our agitators and propagandists, the fact of their existence must be especially emphasised. This is why we have made a special point of it. The people's attention is being and should be called to this fact, all the more so because the treaties were concluded by the Tsar who has been overthrown. The people's attention ought to be called to the fact that the present governments are carrying on the war on the basis of treaties concluded between the old governments. This, I feel, makes the contradiction between the capitalist interests and the will of the people stand out most strikingly, and it is for the agitators to expose these contradictions, to call the people's attention to them, to strive to explain them to the masses by appealing to their class consciousness. Inasmuch as all the governments keep these treaties secret, we infer that the treaties doubtless hold out the promise of enormous profits to the capitalists, to be derived from robbing other countries. There is not a republic in the world whose foreign policy is conducted in the open. While the capitalist system exists, it is fatuous to expect the capitalists to open their ledgers. While there is private ownership of the means of production, there is bound to be private ownership of stocks and financial operations. The

cornerstone of contemporary diplomacy is financial operations, which in their final analysis mean the robbing and the crushing of weaker nationalities. From our point of view, these are the fundamental premises upon which our evaluation of the war rests. Starting with them, we come to the following conclusion:

For this reason a proletarian party can support neither the present war, nor the present government, nor its loans, without breaking completely with internationalism, *i. e.*, with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all lands in their struggle against the yoke of capital.

This is our chief and basic method. It determines our whole policy, and it differentiates us from all the other parties, regardless of how Socialist they claim to be. This principle seems to us irrefutable, and it predetermines our attitude toward all the other political parties. Next follows a statement concerning the extravagant promises made by the government. Around these promises a prolonged campaign is carried on by the Soviets who have become themselves entangled in these promises, which are very trying to the people. We have, therefore, deemed it necessary to add to our purely objective analysis of the class relations an analysis of those promises,—promises which in themselves have, of course, no significance in the eyes of a Marxist, but which mean a great deal to the people, and mean still more in politics. The Petrograd Soviet has become entangled in these promises, has added weight to them by promising its support. This is the reason why we add the following statement:

No confidence can be placed in the promises of the present government to renounce annexations, *i. e.*, conquests of foreign countries, or in the promise to renounce forcible retention within the confines of Russia of this or that nationality.

Since the word "annexation" is foreign, we have given it an exact political definition, such as neither the Cadet party nor the petty-bourgeois democratic parties (the Narodniks * and Mensheviks) could possibly give. Few words have been used so meaninglessly and so carelessly.

For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound by thousands of threads of banking capital, cannot renounce annexations in the present war without renouncing the profits on the billions invested in loans, in concessions, in war industries, etc. And, in the second place, the new government, having

* Populists.—*Ed.*

renounced annexations in order to deceive the people, declared through Miliukov (Moscow, April 22, 1917), that it had no intentions of renouncing annexations, and, in the note of May 1 and in the explanations of it of May 5, confirmed the annexationist character of its policy.

In warning the people against the empty promises of the capitalists, the conference, therefore, declares that it is necessary to distinguish sharply between a renunciation of annexations in words and a renunciation of annexations in deed, *i. e.*, the immediate publication and abrogation of all the secret, predatory treaties, and the immediate granting to all nationalities of the right to determine by free voting whether they wish to be independent states or to be part of any other state.

We have found it necessary to point out the foregoing, because the question of peace without annexations is the fundamental question in all discussions of peace terms. All parties recognise that peace will become the paramount issue, and that peace with annexations will be an unheard-of catastrophe for all countries. In a country where there is political freedom, the question of peace cannot be placed before the people otherwise than in terms of peace without annexations. It is therefore necessary to declare in favour of peace without annexations, at the same time lying by using the word "annexations" in a very vague sense, or evading the question altogether. The *Riech*, for instance, cries that the return of Courland to Russia means renunciation of annexations. When I spoke before the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, one soldier handed me a slip of paper with the following question: "We are forced to fight to win back Courland. Does reconquering of Courland mean fighting for annexations?" I was forced to reply affirmatively. We are against German's forcible annexation of Courland, but we are also against Russia's forcible retention of Courland. For example, our government has issued a manifesto proclaiming the independence of Poland. The manifesto is full of meaningless phrases. It does, however, state that Poland must form a free military alliance with Russia. These three words contain the whole truth. A free military alliance of little Poland with huge Russia is, in point of fact, complete military subjection of Poland. Poland may be granted freedom politically; its boundaries, however, will be determined by the military alliance.

If we fight to insure the supremacy of the Russian capitalists over the former territories of Courland and Poland, then the German capitalists have the right to rob Courland. They may argue this way: At the end of the eighteenth century you and we looted Poland together. Prussia then was a very small and a very weak country;

Russia was strong, therefore Russia grabbed more. Now we have grown stronger and it is our purpose, if you please, to snatch a larger share. It is impossible to refute this capitalist logic. In 1863 Japan was a mere zero in comparison with Russia, but in 1905 Japan thrashed Russia. In 1863-1873 Germany was a mere zero in comparison with England, but now Germany is stronger than England. The Germans may argue: We were weak when Courland was taken from us; we have now grown stronger than you, and we wish to take it back. Not to renounce annexations means to justify the interminable wars conducted for the conquest of weak nationalities. To renounce annexations means to let each people determine freely whether it wants to live separately or together with others. Of course, for this purpose, the armies must be withdrawn. To manifest the slightest hesitation in the matter of annexations means to encourage endless wars. It follows that in this matter we allow no hesitation. With regard to annexations, our answer is—free decision of the peoples. But how can we secure economic freedom alongside this political freedom? To accomplish this, power must pass into the hands of the proletariat and the yoke of capitalism must be overthrown.

I now pass on to the second part of the resolution.

The so-called "revolutionary defencism," which in Russia has permeated all the Narodnik parties (the People's Socialists, Trudoviks, Socialists-Revolutionists), as well as the opportunist party of the Social-Democratic Mensheviks of the Organisation Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the unaffiliated revolutionists, represents, by its class character, on the one hand the interests and the standpoint of the wealthier peasants and a part of the small proprietors who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, "revolutionary defencism" is the outcome of the deception by the capitalists of part of the city and village proletarians who by their class position, have no interest in the profits of the capitalists and in the imperialist war.

This means that it is our task here to indicate what strata of society could give rise to the defencist tendency. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois country in the world, and the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie are directly interested in prolonging this war. The wealthier peasants, like the capitalists, are profiting by the war. On the other hand, the large mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians has no interest in annexations, because it makes no profit on bank capital. How, then, have these classes come to adopt the standpoint of revolutionary defencism? Such an attitude of these classes toward revolutionary defencism is the outgrowth of bour-

geois ideology which the resolution designates by the word "deception." They are unable to differentiate between the interests of the capitalists and the interests of the country. Hence we conclude:

The conference declares that any concession to revolutionary defencism is absolutely not permissible and would actually signify a complete break with internationalism and Socialism. As for the defencist tendencies present among the great masses, our party will struggle against these tendencies by ceaselessly emphasising the truth that any attitude of uncritical confidence in the government of the capitalists at the present moment is one of the greatest obstacles to a speedy conclusion of the war.

The last words express the peculiarity that distinguishes Russia from the other capitalist Western countries, and from all the capitalist democratic republics. For it cannot be said of those countries that it is the confidence of the ignorant masses that chiefly makes it possible to prolong the war. There the masses are in the iron grip of military discipline. The more discipline, the more democratic is the republic, since power in a republic rests on "the will of the people." Owing to the revolution there is no such discipline in Russia. The masses freely elect representatives to the Soviets—a phenomenon that cannot be seen at the present time anywhere in the world. But they are ignorantly credulous, hence they are being used for the purposes of war. So far we can do nothing but explain. Our explanations must deal with the immediate revolutionary problems and methods of action. As long as the masses are free, any attempt to act in the name of a minority without explaining to the masses may be stamped as senseless Blanquism, as an attempt of adventurers. Only by winning the masses, if they can be won, can we lay a solid foundation for the triumph of the proletarian class struggle.

I now pass on to the third part of the resolution:

As for the most important question of the manner of concluding as soon as possible the present capitalist war, not by an oppressive peace, but by a truly democratic peace, the conference recognises and declares the following:

This war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war, by a simple cessation of war activities on the part of one side only.

The idea of thus concluding the war has been attributed to us over and over again by persons who wish to win an easy victory over their opponents by distorting the latter's view,—a usual method of capitalists who ascribe to us the absurd idea of wishing to end the war by a one-sided refusal to fight. They say: "The war cannot

be brought to an end by the simple expedient of sticking the bayonet into the ground," to quote one soldier who is a typical revolutionary defencist. I maintain, however, that this is no argument to confute us. The whole idea that the war can be concluded without a change in the ruling classes is an Anarchist idea. Either this idea is Anarchist—in that case it has no significance, no meaning for any state, or it is humanitarian and pacifist and fails to appreciate the connection existing between politics and the oppressing class. War is an evil, peace is a blessing. . . . Certainly this idea must be made clear to the masses, must be popularised. And generally speaking, all our resolutions are being written for the leading elements of the party, for the Marxists; they are not intelligible reading for the masses. But they must serve as unifying and guiding political principles for every propagandist and agitator. To meet this requirement, one more paragraph was added:

> The conference reiterates its protests against the base slander circulated by the capitalists against our party to the effect that we are in favour of a separate peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists as robbers no less than the capitalists of Russia, England, France, etc., and Emperor Wilhelm just as much of a crowned bandit as Nicholas II and the monarchs of England, Italy, Rumania, and all the rest.

With regard to this point there was some disagreement among the members of the commission. First, some maintained that at this point our language became too popular; secondly, that the English, Italian, and Rumanian monarchs did not deserve the honour of being mentioned here. After a prolonged discussion, however, we came to the unanimous conclusion that, in view of the fact that our present aim is to refute all the slanders which the *Birzhevka* has attempted to spread against us rather crudely, the *Riech* more subtly, the *Yedinstvo* by transparent innuendoes, we must, on a question of this character, come out with a very sharp and telling criticism of these ideas, having in view the broadest possible masses of the people. When we are asked: why not help overthrow Wilhelm if you consider him a robber, we may answer that the others are also robbers, that we ought to fight against them as well, that one must not forget the kings of Italy and Rumania, who belong to our Allies. These two sentences are intended to combat the slander that is liable to lead to squabbles and pogroms. This is the reason why we must now pass on to the serious question of how to conclude the war.

Our party will explain to the people, with patience and persistence, the truth that wars are carried on by governments, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of certain classes, that this war may be terminated by a democratic peace only if the entire state power in at least several of the belligerent countries has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians who are really capable of putting an end to the bondage of capitalism.

To a Marxist the statements that wars are carried on by capitalists and that they are bound up with their class interests, are absolute truths. A Marxist does not have to dwell on that. But when skilful agitators and propagandists appear before the masses, they must be able to explain this truth simply, without resorting to foreign words, for with us, in Russia, discussions very often degenerate into empty and futile quibbling. This we try to achieve in every part of our resolution. We say: in order to understand the war, one must inquire who profits by the war; in order to understand how to put an end to the war, one must find out which classes do not profit by the war. The connection here is perfectly clear, hence we deduce:

In Russia, the revolutionary class, upon having seized the state power, would inaugurate a series of measures to undermine the economic rule of the capitalists, as well as of measures that would render them completely harmless politically, and would immediately and frankly offer to all peoples a democratic peace on the basis of a complete relinquishment of every possible form of annexation or indemnity.

Once we speak in the name of the revolutionary class, the people have the right to ask: well, and what about you, what would you do in their place to end the war? This is an inevitable question. The people are electing us now as their representatives, and we must make a perfectly precise answer. The revolutionary class would set out by undermining the rule of the capitalists, it would then offer to all the peoples precise peace terms, because, unless the rule of the capitalists is undermined, all we can have are scraps of paper. Only a victorious class can accomplish this, can bring about a change in policy.

I repeat once more: in order to reach the uneducated masses, in order to introduce this question to the uninitiated, we need intermediate links in the logical development of our idea. The main fallacy and falsity of popular literature on war lies in the fact that this question is being evaded, it is being passed over in silence, that the matter is represented as if there were no class struggle, as if two

countries had lived peacefully, but one attacked the other, and the attacked defended itself. This is a vulgar reasoning in which there is not a shadow of objective truth, it is the way in which educated people deliberately deceive the masses. If approached properly, any representative of the masses would be able to grasp the essential point; for the interests of the ruling classes are one thing, and the interests of the oppressed classes are another.

What would happen, if the revolutionary class seized power?

> Such measures, and such an open offer of peace would bring about an attitude of complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries towards each other. . . .

Such confidence is impossible now, and wordy manifestos will not create it. A certain thinker once said that language has been given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts. The diplomats say: "Conferences are convened to enable us to deceive the people." Not only the capitalists, but the Socialists too reason this way. To be specific, this may be said of the conference called by Borgbjerg.

> . . . and would inevitably lead to uprisings of the proletariat against such imperialist governments as might resist the offered peace.

When the capitalist government now says: "We are for peace without annexations"—nobody believes it. The masses of the people have the instinct of oppressed classes which tells them that nothing has changed. Only if the policy were actually changed in one country, confidence would awaken and attempts at uprisings would be made. We speak of "uprisings" because we are now discussing all the countries. "A revolution has taken place in one country, now it must take place in Germany"—this is false reasoning. One is trying to establish a sequence, but this one must not do. All of us went through the revolution of 1905. All of us heard or witnessed how that revolution released a flood of revolutionary ideas throughout the world. Marx often spoke of this influence of revolutions. Still, revolutions cannot be just made, nor is it possible to establish an order of sequence. A revolution cannot be made to order—it grows. What they are now palming off on our people is charlatanism pure and simple. The people are told: Well, you in Russia have made a revolution, now it is the Germans' turn. If the objective conditions change, uprising is inevitable. But as

to the order of sequence, as to the precise moment, as to the degree of success, this no one knows. We are asked: If the revolutionary class assumes power in Russia, and if no uprisings break out in the other countries, what will the revolutionary party do? Indeed, what will we do? This question is answered in the last paragraph of our resolution.

> Until the revolutionary class in Russia shall have taken over the entire state power, our party will with all means support those proletarian parties and groups in foreign countries as are already, during the continuance of the war, conducting a revolutionary struggle against their own imperialist governments and their own bourgeoisie.

This is all that we can promise and must do now. The revolution is growing in all countries, but when it will break out, and to what extent, no one knows. In every country there are people who are carrying on a revolutionary struggle against their government. Them and them alone we must support. This is the real thing,—all the rest is a lie. And we add:

> Particularly will our party support the mass fraternisation of the soldiers of all the belligerent countries that has already begun at the front. . . .

This is to confute Plekhanov, who argues: "What will be the outcome of all this? Suppose you fraternise, then what? Does not this suggest the possibility of a separate peace at the front?" This is acrobatics, it is not a serious argument. We want fraternisation on all the fronts, and we are taking pains to encourage it. When we worked in Switzerland, we published a proclamation in two languages: in French on one side of the page; in German on the other. We urged those soldiers to do the same thing that we are now urging the Russian soldiers to do. We do not limit ourselves to the fraternisation between the German and the Russian soldiers, we call upon all to fraternise. This, then, is what we mean by fraternisation:

> We will thereby endeavour to transform this instinctive expression of solidarity of the oppressed into a class-conscious, well-organised movement for the taking over of all state power in all the belligerent countries by the revolutionary proletariat.

Fraternisation so far is purely instinctive; we must not deceive ourselves on this score. We must admit this, in order not to delude the people. The fraternising soldiers are not actuated by a clear

political idea. Rather are they actuated by the instinct of oppressed people, weary, exhausted, and disillusioned in capitalistic promises. They say: "While you keep on talking about peace there,—we have been hearing it now for over two and a half years,—we shall begin concluding it ourselves." This is a true class instinct. Without this instinct the cause of the revolution would be hopeless. For, you know, nobody will free the workers, if they do not free themselves. But is instinct alone sufficient? You would not get very far if you relied on instinct alone. This instinct must be transformed into conscious intelligence.

In our proclamation, "To the Soldiers of All the Belligerent Countries," we answer the question as to what this fraternisation should develop into. We say: "Into the passing of political power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies." Naturally, the German soldiers will call their Soviets by a different name, but this does not matter. The point is that we admit that so far fraternisation has been purely instinctive, which is an incontrovertible truth, that we do not confine ourselves to encouraging fraternisation, that our objective is to turn this instinctive coming together of workers and peasants of all the countries attired in soldiers' uniforms into a conscious movement, looking toward the passing of state power in all the belligerent countries into the hands of the revolutionary proletariat. This task is difficult, but the position in which humanity finds itself under capitalist rule is monstrously difficult, and leads humanity to ruin. This is why it will call forth that outburst of indigation which is the guarantee of proletarian revolution.

This is our resolution, which we submit to the attention of the conference.

REPORT ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

Comrades: Our party has considered the agrarian question with such thoroughness even during the first revolution, that by this time, I think, our ideas on the subject are pretty well defined. As proof, we have the fact that the section of the conference which is composed of comrades fully versed and deeply interested in this subject has unanimously agreed on the proposed resolution, and has not suggested any substantial corrections. I shall therefore confine myself to a few very brief remarks. And since all the

members are in possession of proof sheets of the draft, there is no need for reading it in full.

The present growth of the agrarian movement throughout the whole of Russia is perfectly obvious and undeniable. Our party programme, proposed by the Mensheviks, and adopted by the Stockholm Congress in 1906, had proved inadequate even in the course of the first Russian Revolution. At that Congress the Mensheviks had succeeded in having their programme of municipalisation adopted. In its essence their programme was as follows: The peasant lands, communal as well as private, were to remain the property of the peasants. The lands belonging to the owners of estates were to be taken over by the organs of local self-government. One of the main reasons advanced by the Mensheviks in favour of such a programme was that the peasants would never understand the transfer of peasant lands to any one but the peasants. A study of the minutes of the Stockholm Congress shows that this argument was particularly stressed by Maslov and Kostrov, who reported on the question. We must not forget—as is often done nowadays—that the congress took place before the first Duma, when there was no definite information about the peasant movement and its strength. Every one knew that Russia was in the midst of an agrarian revolution, but no one knew how that agrarian movement would be organised, nor what slogans would be used in the development of the peasant revolution. There was no way of checking up whether the opinions expressed by the congress were the serious and practical views held by the peasants themselves. This was the reason why the Menshevik arguments carried weight with many delegates. Soon after the Stockholm Congress, we received the first substantial indication how the peasant masses viewed this question. In both the first and the second Dumas, the peasants themselves came out with the "Bill of 104." * I have made a special study of the signatures under this bill, I have familiarised myself in detail with the opinions of the various Deputies, their class affiliations, the extent to which they may be called peasants. And I have stated categorically in my book, which was burned by the Tsar's censor but which I intend to republish, that of the 104 signatories the overwhelming majority were peasants. That bill provided for the nationalisation of the land. The peasants wanted the entire land to become the property of the state.

* The programme for the nationalisation of the land presented in the Second Duma by 104 peasant deputies.—*Ed.*

How, then, can we explain the fact that in both Dumas the Deputies representing the entire Russian peasantry preferred the nationalisation of land to the measures in behalf of the peasantry pressed in both Dumas by the Mensheviks? The Mensheviks proposed that the peasants retain the ownership of their own lands, and that only the lands belonging to the large landowners be transferred to the people; the peasants, on the contrary, maintained that the entire land should be transferred to the people. How can we account for this? The Socialists-Revolutionists say that, owing to the preponderance of the "communal principle" * in the villages, the Russian peasants are in sympathy with socialisation, with the labour principle. All this phraseology is absolutely meaningless, it is nothing but words. As a matter of fact the peasants came to the conclusion to which they did because of the fact that all landownership in Russia, whether peasant or landlord, communal or individual, was maintained under antiquated, semi-feudal conditions. And the peasants, considering market conditions, were forced to demand the transfer of the land to all the people. The peasants claim that the tangle of old agrarian life can be untangled only through nationalisation. Their point of view is bourgeois; by equalised use of land they mean the confiscation of the lands of the rich landowners, but not the making of the land possessions of individual owners equal. By nationalisation they mean a redistribution of the land on the basis of the present peasant population. This is really a bourgeois project. None of the peasants mentioned equalisation or socialisation; what they asserted was that it was impossible to wait any longer, that the land had to be redivided,—in other words, they maintained that under twentieth century conditions it was impossible to retain the old forms of agriculture. There were to be no variegated forms of landownership. In this there is not the slightest suggestion of socialisation. A brief summary of the statistics relating to land possessions in 1905 shows that on the average 300 peasant families held as much land (2,000 desiatinas) as one landlord family. That is the reason why the peasant demand is called a demand for equalisation. In this sense it is, of course, equalisation, but from this it does not at all follow that the peasant wants to equalise all small households. The bill of the 104 reveals the opposite.

* The Narodniks believed that Socialist ideas were inherent in the peasants, and that communal landownership with individual use of the land by the peasant was a manifestation of those ideas.—*Ed.*

It is necessary to state these ideas, for they offer a scientific basis for our opinion that, from the bourgeois-democratic standpoint, the nationalisation of land is indispensable. But nationalisation is also necessary for another reason,—it deals an overwhelming blow to the institution of private ownership of the means of production. To imagine that upon the abolition of private property in land everything in Russia will remain as of old, is simply absurd.

In addition, the draft resolution contains some practical conclusions and demands. Of the minor corrections I shall call attention to the following:

The first point in the resolution reads: "The party of the proletariat supports wholeheartedly the immediate and complete confiscation of all the land owned by the landowners. . . ." Instead of "supports" we ought to say "fights for." . . . Our point of view is not that the peasants have not enough land and that they need more. This is the current opinion. We say that private landownership is the basis of the oppression that crushes the peasantry and retards its development. The question is not whether the peasants have or have not enough land. Down with feudal oppression!—this is how the matter should be put from the standpoint of the revolutionary class struggle, and not from the standpoint of those bureaucrats who keep on arguing as to how much land the peasants have and as to how to distribute it. The order of points two and three should, in my opinion, be reversed, because to us revolutionary initiative is more important than an abstract law; the law must be the result of such initiative. If you wait until the law is written, and do not in the meanwhile take revolutionary action, you will have neither the law nor the land.

People often object to nationalisation by saying that it presupposes a gigantic bureaucratic apparatus. This is true, but state landownership implies that every peasant is leasing the land from the state, and that the transfer of leaseholds is prohibited. The question therefore as to how much and what kind of land the peasant shall hold is to be entirely settled by the proper democratic, not bureaucratic, organ of authority.

For "farm hands" we substitute "agricultural workers." Several comrades maintained that the word "farm hand" was offensive; objections were raised to this word. It should be removed.

It is useless to speak now of proletarian-peasant committees or councils in connection with the settlement of the land question, for,

as we see, the peasants have already created Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies, and have thus effected a division between the proletariat and the peasantry.

Everybody knows that the petty-bourgeois defencist parties want the settlement of the land question postponed until the Constituent Assembly meets. We demand the immediate transfer of all lands to the peasants in a highly organised manner. We are absolutely against anarchistic seizures. You propose that the peasants enter into agreements with the landowners. We say that the land should be taken over right now. The lands must be cultivated immediately if we wish to avert hunger, to save the country from the collapse which is drawing nearer with terrific rapidity. One cannot now accept the prescriptions offered by Shingarev and the Cadets who suggest that we wait for the Constituent Assembly which is to convene on a date as yet unknown, nor can we now enter into agreements as to land tenure with the landowners. The peasants are already seizing the land without paying for it, or paying only one-fourth of the former rental.

One comrade has brought a local resolution from the province of Penza. The resolution says that the peasants are seizing the landowners' agricultural implements, which however they do not divide among the individual peasants, but turn into communal property. They establish a definite order, a rule, in which these implements are to be used by the various peasants in the cultivation of their land. In resorting to such measures, they are chiefly interested in increasing agricultural production. This fact is of tremendous constructive significance, despite the landowners and the capitalists who shout that this is anarchy. But if they keep on talking and shouting about this as anarchy, and if the peasants in the meantime sit back and wait, then you will indeed have anarchy. The peasants have proved that they understand economic conditions and social control much better than do the government officials, and that they apply such control a hundred times more efficiently. Such an undertaking, easily realisable in a small village, inevitably leads to more sweeping measures. When the peasant comes to learn this,—and he has already begun to learn it,—the knowledge of bourgeois professors will not be needed; he will himself conclude that it is essential that the agricultural implements be utilised not only in the cultivation of pieces of land but in the cultivation of the entire land. What methods the peasants pursue in accomplishing

this, are not important. We do not know whether they combine their individual fields for communal tilling and sowing or not, and it does not matter, if each community follows its own methods. What does matter is that the peasants are fortunate in not having with them a large number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who style themselves Marxists, Social-Democrats, and with a grave mien teach the people that the time is not yet ripe for a Socialist revolution and that therefore the peasants must not take the land. Fortunately there are few such gentlemen in the Russian villages. If the peasants contented themselves merely with taking the land on the basis of agreements with the landowners, and failed to apply their own methods collectively, failure would be inevitable, and the peasant committees would become mere toys, a game without odds. This is the reason why we propose to add point eight to the resolution.

Once we know that the local peasants have themselves taken the initiative, it is our duty to declare that we support and recommend their action. Only in such action do we find the assurance that the revolution will not be limited to measures of a formal character, that the struggle against the crisis will not remain a mere subject for departmental discussion and Shingarev's epistles, but that the peasants will actually go forth in an organised way to fight famine and to work for greater production.

REPLY TO N. S. ANGARSKY DURING THE DEBATE ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

COMRADES: I think that Comrade Angarsky is guilty of a number of contradictions. I have been speaking of the material basis for the aspiration toward nationalisation. The peasants have no conception of the meaning of nationalisation. I have said that there are certain conditions prevailing on the all-Russian and world markets, and that those conditions are responsible for the high prices of grain. Every peasant sees, knows and feels these fluctuations of prices, and agriculture must be conducted in harmony with those conditions. I claim that our system of landholding is antiquated, that there is a discrepancy between the old and the new methods of agriculture, and that this discrepancy has impelled the peasant to strive for a change. The peasant is a private owner, asserts Comrade Angarsky. He is perfectly right. It is on the

basis of this fact that Stolypin wanted to change the old system of agricultural relations; he did everything possible to bring that about, and still he failed, because it is impossible to change these relations without revolutionary changes. This is the material basis for the peasant's aspiration toward the nationalisation of land, though the peasant is absolutely ignorant as to the real meaning of nationalisation. The peasant who holds to private ownership has an instinctive tendency to maintain that the land belongs to God. The reason is that it has become impossible to continue under the old forms of landownership. What Comrade Angarsky proposes is the result of gross misunderstanding. The second paragraph of our resolution states that peasant landownership, from top to bottom and all along the line, is entangled in a maze of antiquated semi-feudal relations. But does that paragraph make any reference to the estates of the great landowners? No. Comrade Angarsky's amendment is based on a misapprehension. He attributed to me things I never said, things of which the peasants have not the slightest conception. The peasants know the world situation by the price of grain and of other staple commodities. If a railroad passes through his village, the peasant learns these things in connection with his own household. It has become impossible to live in the old way. This the peasant feels, and he expresses this feeling in his radical demand for the overthrow of the entire old system of landownership. The peasant wants to be a proprietor, but he wants to be one on land newly divided; he wants to conduct his economic enterprise on land the ownership of which is determined by his present needs, and not by the needs prescribed for him by various bureaucrats. The peasant knows it perfectly well, but of course he expresses it differently, and this is the material basis for the peasant's aspiration toward the nationalisation of the land.*

SPEECH ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES—BRIEF PRESS REPORT

Lenin pointed out that the French Revolution went through a period of municipal revolution, that it gained strength in local organs of self-government which became its mainstay. In the Russian Revolution, he observed, there has been a tendency towards bureaucracy in the centres, and a tendency to exercise greater power

* The Resolution on the Agrarian Question, written by Lenin, pp. 61-62.—*Ed.*

by local and provincial Soviets. The Soviets in the capitals are politically more dependent upon the bourgeois central government than the Soviets in the provinces. In the centres it is not so easy to take over the management of industries; in the provinces this has been partly accomplished already. Hence the conclusion that the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies must be strengthened. In this respect progress can be first of all achieved in the provinces.

SPEECH ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Ever since 1903, when our party adopted its programme, we have been encountering the desperate opposition of the Poles. A study of the minutes of the second congress reveals that even then the Poles were advancing the same argument that they are advancing now, and that the Polish Social-Democrats had left the congress because our recognition of the right of nations to self-determination was unacceptable to them. And we have been confronted with this question ever since. Though imperialism was already in existence in 1903, there was no mention made of it in the many arguments then advanced. And the position of the Polish Social-Democracy is as strange and monstrous an error now as it was then. These people wish to reduce the stand of our party to that of the chauvinists.

The policy of Poland is thoroughly nationalistic owing to Russia's age-long oppression of Poland, and the entire Polish people is permeated with one idea—revenge upon the Muscovites. No one has oppressed the Poles as much as have the Russian people. The Russian people have served in the hands of the Tsars as the executioner of Polish freedom. No one hates Russia so intensely as do the Poles, and this has resulted in a peculiar situation. On account of the Polish bourgeoisie, Poland has become an obstacle in the path of the Socialist movement. Let the world go hang, as long as Poland is free. Of course, to put the question in this light means to make a farce of internationalism. Of course, Poland is now a subject nation, but for the Polish nationalists to count on Russia to effect Poland's liberation is treason to internationalism. Still, the Polish nationalists have so imbued the Polish people with their spirit that this view prevails.

The great historic service rendered by our comrades, the Polish

Social-Democrats, consists in their advancing the slogan of internationalism, in their maintaining that brotherly union of the proletariat of all countries was of supreme importance to them and that they would refuse to go to war for the liberation of Poland. This is their great service, and this is why we have always regarded as Socialists only those Social-Democrats in Poland. The others are social-patriots, Polish Plekhanovs. But this unique situation, where people, to safeguard Socialism, were forced to struggle against a rabid, morbid nationalism, has been productive of a strange phenomenon: The Polish comrades come and tell us that we must renounce the freedom of Poland, its right of separation.

Why should we, Great-Russians, who have been oppressing a greater number of nations than any other people, why should we repudiate the right of separation for Poland, the Ukraine, Finland? We are asked to become chauvinists, because by doing that we would render the position of Social-Democrats in Poland less difficult. We make no pretence at seeking to liberate Poland, because the Polish people dwell between two states capable of fighting. But instead of teaching the Polish workers that chauvinists have no place in the Socialist Party and that only those Social-Democrats are real democrats who maintain that the Polish people ought to be free, the Polish Social-Democrats argue that just because they find the union with the Russian workers advantageous they are opposed to Poland's separation. They have a perfect right to do so. But these people fail to understand that to enhance internationalism is not at all necessary to reiterate the same words. In Russia we must stress the right of separation for the subject nations, while in Poland we must stress the right of such nations to unite. The right to unite implies the right to separate. We Russians must emphasise the right to separate, while the Poles must emphasise the right to unite.

We notice here a number of sophisms leading to a complete renunciation of Marxism. Comrade Piatakov's standpoint is a repetition of Rosa Luxemburg's standpoint. . . .* (Holland is an example.) This is how Comrade Piatakov reasons, and this is also how he confutes himself. Theoretically he is against the right of separation, but to the people he declares that one who is against the right of separation is no Socialist. What Comrade Piatakov says is

* An omission in the minutes.—*Ed.*

incredible confusion. In Western Europe most of the countries have settled their national questions long ago. When one says that the national question has been settled, one speaks of Western Europe. Comrade Piatakov applies this where it does not belong, to Eastern Europe, and we find ourselves in a ridiculous position.

Think of the terrible mess that results! Finland is right at our side. Comrade Piatakov supplies no definite answer as to Finland; he is in utter confusion. In yesterday's *Rabochaia Gazeta* we have read that separatism is growing in Finland. Finns arriving here inform us that separatism is developing in their country, because the Cadets have refused to grant it complete autonomy. There a crisis is approaching; dissatisfaction with Governor-General Rodichev is rife, but here the *Rabochaia Gazeta* insists that the Finns ought to wait for the Constituent Assembly, that then an agreement will be effected between Finland and Russia. What is an agreement? The Finns must maintain that they are entitled to determine their own destiny in their own way, and any Great-Russian who denies this right is a chauvinist. It would be another thing entirely if we said to the Finnish worker: Decide as is most advantageous to you. . . .

Comrade Piatakov simply rejects our slogan, when he says that this is no slogan for a Socialist revolution. He himself, however, has not offered any other slogan. The method of accomplishing a Socialist revolution under the slogan: "Down with the boundaries" is an utter absurdity. We have not succeeded in publishing the article in which I branded this view as "imperialist economism." What does "the method" of a Socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with the boundaries" mean? We maintain that the state is necessary, and the existence of a state presupposes boundaries. The state may of course be ruled by a bourgeois government, while we need the Soviets. But even the Soviets are confronted with the question of boundaries. What does it mean, "Down with the boundaries"? This is the beginning of anarchy. . . . The "method" of a Socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with the boundaries" is a hodgepodge. When the time is ripe for a Socialist revolution, when the revolution finally occurs, it will sweep across boundaries. We shall help it along, but how, we do not yet know. "The method of a Socialist revolution" is a mere phrase, devoid of meaning. In so far as the bourgeois revolution has left some problems unsolved, we shall solve them. As regards the separatist movement, we are neutral, indifferent. If Finland, if Poland, if the Ukraine break

away from Russia, it is nothing terrible. Wherein is it bad? One who says so, is a chauvinist. One must be insane to continue the policy of Tsar Nicholas. Norway has separated from Sweden. . . . Once upon a time Alexander I and Napoleon traded peoples, once upon a time the Tsars were trading portions of Poland. Are we to continue this policy of the Tsars? This is repudiation of internationalist tactics, this is chauvinism of the worst brand. Suppose Finland does separate, why is it so bad? In both peoples among the proletariat of Norway and Sweden mutual confidence increased after separation. The Swedish landowners wanted to wage war, but the Swedish workers refused to be drawn into such a war.

All the Finns want now is autonomy. We stand for the complete freedom of Finland. Only when this ideal is realised, will faith in Russian democracy be strengthened, will the Finns refuse to separate. While Mr. Rodichev goes to Finland to haggle over autonomy, our Finnish comrades come here and maintain that they need autonomy. But they are met with a volley of cannon-shots and are told: "Wait for the Constituent Assembly." We, however, say: "Any Russian Socialist who denies freedom to Finland is a chauvinist."

We say that boundaries are determined by the will of the population. Russia, you must not dare fight over Courland! Germany, out with your armies from Courland! This is our solution of the separation problem. The proletariat must not resort to force, for it must not interfere with the freedom of peoples. Only then will the slogan "Down with the boundaries" be a true slogan, when the Socialist revolution has become a reality, and not a method. Then we shall say: Comrades, come unto us. . . .

Now war is an entirely different matter. When necessary, we shall not refuse to wage a revolutionary war. We are no pacifists. . . . But while we have Miliukov enthroned, and while he sends Rodichev to Finland, where he haggles shamefully with the Finnish people, we say to the Russian people: Don't you dare rape Finland; no people can be free which oppresses another people. In our resolution concerning Borgbjerg we state: Withdraw your armies, and let the nation settle this question by itself. But if the Soviet seizes power to-morrow, that will no longer constitute a "method of a Socialist revolution," we shall then say: Germany, out with your armies from Poland; Russia, out with your armies from Armenia,—otherwise, the whole thing will be a lie.

Regarding his oppressed Poland, Comrade Dzierzynski tells us that everybody is a chauvinist there. But why does not any Pole tell us what we should do with Finland, what we should do with the Ukraine? We have been arguing this question ever since 1903; it is becoming difficult to dwell on it. Go whither you please. . . . He who does not accept this point of view is an annexationist, a chauvinist. We are for a fraternal union of all nations. If there is a Ukrainian republic and a Russian republic, there will be closer contact, greater confidence between the two. If the Ukrainians see that we have a Soviet republic, they will not break away. But if we retain the Miliukov republic, they will break away. When Comrade Piatakov, contradicting his own views, said that he is against the forcible retention of nations within the boundaries of Russia, he really recognised the principle of self-determination. We do not at all want the peasant in Khiva to live under the Khan of Khiva. By developing our revolution we shall influence the oppressed masses. Propaganda within the oppressed masses can be carried on only in this manner.

But any Russian Socialist who does not recognise the freedom of Finland and the Ukraine, is bound to degenerate into a chauvinist. And no sophisms, no references to a special "method" will help him justify himself.

SPEECH ON THE PROPOSED CALLING OF AN INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

I CANNOT agree with Comrade Nogin. We are confronted here, I think, with a fact of extraordinary political importance, and we are in duty bound to launch a vigorous campaign against the Russian and Anglo-French chauvinists who have declined Borgbjerg's invitation to participate in the conference. We ought not to overlook the essence, the meaning, of this whole affair. I am going to read to you Borgbjerg's proposal exactly as it was reported by the *Rabochaia Gazeta.* I shall point out how back of this whole comedy of a would-be Socialist congress there are actually the political manœuvres of German imperialism. The German capitalists use the German social-chauvinists for the purpose of inviting the social-chauvinists of all countries to the conference. That is why it is necessary to launch a great campaign.

Why do they do it through the Socialists? Because they want to

fool the working masses. Those diplomats are subtle; to say so openly would not do, they think it more effective to utilise a Danish Plekhanov. We have seen hundreds of German chauvinists abroad; they must be exposed.

(*Reads an excerpt from the Rabochaia Gazeta, No. 39, May 8, 1917.*)

On behalf of the joint committee of the three Scandinavian labour parties (Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish), Borgbjerg, editor of the Danish Social-Democratic organ *Social-Demokraten*, has forwarded a message to the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies inviting all the Socialist parties in Russia to send their representatives to an international Socialist conference. Because of the proximity of Denmark to Germany, Borgbjerg was able to communicate mainly with representatives of the "majority" fraction of the German Social-Democratic Party. From him the committee learned the peace terms which the official Social-Democratic Party of Germany would consider acceptable, and which its representatives would propose to the conference.

The terms follow:

First of all they subscribe to the principles laid down by the Scandinavian and Dutch Socialists at the 1915 conference, namely, the self-determination of nations, the obligation of all countries to bring their differences before an international court of arbitration, the demand for gradual disarmament. They furthermore add that the German Social-Democracy will insist upon the following:

1. All territories occupied by Germany and her allies are to be given up;
2. Russian Poland is to be granted full freedom to determine whether it wants to remain a part of Russia or to be independent;
3. Belgium is to be restored as a fully independent state;
4. Similarly, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania are to be restored as independent states;
5. Bulgaria is to receive the Bulgarian districts of Macedonia, and Serbia is to be given access to the Adriatic Sea.

As regards Alsace-Lorraine, a peaceful agreement concerning the rectification of Lorraine's boundaries is possible; as far as the Poles of Posen are concerned, the Germans will insist on their obtaining autonomy of national culture.

We have not the slightest doubt that this proposal comes from the German government which, instead of making a straightforward bid, resorts to the services of the Danish Plekhanovs, since, obviously, the services of the German government agents are in this case undesirable. That is why there are social-chauvinists in this world; that they may carry out such commissions. It is our task to expose to the world, in the name of the seventy thousand workers represented at this conference of a proletarian party, the underlying forces and intentions that are kept secret. It is necessary to publish a detailed resolution, to translate it into foreign languages, and thus

to give a deserved rebuff to these gentlemen who dare to inject themselves into a Socialist party.

The Socialist papers are silent this morning. They know what they are about. They know that silence is precious. Only the *Rabochaia Gazeta* has published an article devoid of any critical analysis. On the one hand, we cannot but confess, while, on the other, we must admit. . . .

More than any one else the Russian government may be certain that this is really the work of an agent of the German government.

When we hear the incessant cries about the liberation of Alsace-Lorraine, we must remind those gentlemen that the real question at issue here is the pocket, for there is tremendous wealth in Alsace-Lorraine, and the German capitalists are fighting with the French capitalists for the division of the booty. It is to their advantage to have the Plekhanovs say that the liberation of Alsace-Lorraine is a holy cause. When the German social-chauvinists talk of a peaceful rectification of the boundaries of Alsace-Lorraine, it means peaceful division of the spoil between the French and the German imperialists.

There is one thing more I must add. I forgot to point out the fact that the German representatives of the "centre," Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour, have agreed to this conference. This deserves nothing but contempt. The English and the French Socialists have declined to attend the conference. This indicates that the Anglo-French chauvinists, who call themselves Socialists, are really agents of the bourgeoisie, because they are instrumental in continuing the imperialist war despite the tremendous efforts made by the German Socialist majority through Borgbjerg; for the German government, in using Borgbjerg, undoubtedly, says: The situation is such that I am forced to return to you your booty (the German colonies in Africa). This is confirmed by the fact that the situation in Germany is most desperate, that the country is on the brink of ruin; to carry on the war now is a hopeless task. This is the reason why they say that they are ready to give up almost all the booty, for by saying this they are still striving to retain at least something. The diplomats communicate with each other freely, while the bourgeois papers, whenever they write of foreign affairs, fool the people with phrases.

There is no doubt that when the English and the French social-chauvinists declined to attend the conference, they were familiar with all the facts. They must have gone to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs where they were told: Such and such are the underlying facts, we do not want you to go there. This is exactly what happened.

On the other hand, when the Russian soldiers receive this resolution which must be issued in the name of the seventy thousand members of our party, they will really begin to see into the whole shady affair. They will then understood that Germany is unable further to carry on its war of conquest, and that it is the purpose of the Allies completely to crush and to rob Germany. It cannot be denied that Borgbjerg is an agent of the German government.

This, comrades, is the reason why, I think, we must expose this whole comedy of the Socialist conference, expose all these congresses as comedies intended to cover up the deals made by the diplomats behind the backs of the masses. Once and for all we must tell the truth in such a way that it may be heard by the soldiers at the front and by the workers all over the world. And our campaign with regard to such proposals will serve, on the one hand, to explain our proletarian policy, and, on the other, as a series of mass actions of unprecedented dimensions. I ask you, therefore, to adopt this declaration, to forward it to the Executive Committee, to translate it into foreign languages, and to publish it in tomorrow's *Pravda*.

Comrades, it seems to me that as matters stand it would be expedient to elect an editorial commission, that is, of course, if you agree with the basic ideas of the declaration. Comrade Kamenev's resolution also appears to me acceptable, but it must be considered in connection with the question relating to the International. As for the present, we must forthwith take practical measures to counteract the campaign initiated by Borgbjerg.

SPEECH ON THE SITUATION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL AND THE TASKS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY

COMRADE ZINOVIEV himself recognised that our visit to Stockholm would be the last one, and that our presence there would be purely for informational purposes.

When Grimm invited us to a conference, I refused to go, for I realised that it would be useless to talk to people who stood for social-chauvinism. We say: "No participation with social-chauvinists." We come and address ourselves to any Zimmerwald sec-

tion. Grimm had a moral and a formal right to write to-day's resolution. His right is based on Kautsky in Germany, on Longuet in France. This is how the matter stands officially: Grimm has announced that "we will disband our bureau, as soon as Huysmans organises a bureau." When we said that such a solution was not acceptable to Zimmerwald, he agreed, but declared that "that was the opinion of the majority,"—and he told the truth.

As to our visit. "We shall get information, we shall get in touch with the Left Zimmerwald group," it is claimed. There is very little hope that we shall attract other elements. There is no use in creating illusions for ourselves; first, the visit will not take place; secondly, if it does, it will be our last one; thirdly, we cannot, because of technical obstacles, attract those elements that wish to break with the social-chauvinists. But let Comrade Nogin make the first and Comrade Zinoviev the last visit to Stockholm. As for me, I express the very legitimate wish that this "last visit" experiment may be performed as quickly and successfully as possible.

REPORT ON THE REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME

COMRADES: The situation with regard to the revision of the party programme is this: The first draft of proposed changes in the theoretical part of our programme and in a number of basic points in its political part was submitted to the commission. The whole programme must be revised, its complete obsoleteness having been pointed out in party circles long before the war. It has turned out, however, that there is not the slightest hope for discussing the proposed change of the programme as a whole. On the other hand, the committee has come to the unanimous conclusion that a revision of the programme is imperative, and that in a great number of questions it is possible and necessary to indicate the direction along which such revision should be made. We have therefore agreed on the following draft of a resolution which I am going to read to you now, making brief comments as I go along. We decline at the present time to put forth precisely formulated theses; we simply indicate the direction which any revision should follow.

(*Reads the resolution.*)

The conference recognises as imperative the revision of the party programme along the following lines:

1. Evaluating imperialism and the epoch of imperialist wars in connection

with the approaching Socialist revolution; struggle with the distortion of Marxism by the so-called defencists who have forgotten Marx's slogan—"the workers have no fatherland."

This is so clear that no explanation is needed. Indeed the policy of our party has advanced considerably and has practically taken the stand suggested in the above formulation.

2. Amending the theses and paragraphs dealing with the state; such amendment to be in the nature of a demand for a democratic proletarian-peasant republic (*i. e.*, a type of state functioning without police, without a standing army, and without a privileged bureaucracy), and not for a bourgeois-parliamentary republic.

Other formulations of this point had been proposed. One of them referred to the experience of the Paris Commune and to the experience of the period between the seventies and the eighties of the last century, but such a formulation is unsatisfactory and too general; another referred to a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; this formulation, too, proved unsatisfactory to a majority of the comrades. A formulation, however, is needed, because what matters is not the name of an institution, but its political character and structure. By saying "proletarian-peasant republic," we indicate its social content and political character.

3. Eliminating or amending the obsolete portions of the political programme.

Our general political work within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has practically gone in this direction; there is no doubt, therefore, that the change in this particular point of the programme and the precise formulation of our estimate of the moment in which the revolution found our party, is not likely to provoke any disagreements.

4. Recasting a number of points in the political minimum programme, so as to point out with greater precision more consistent democratic demands.

5. Completely recasting in very many places the out-of-date economic portions of the minimum programme and points relating to popular education.

The main thing here is that these points have grown out of date; the trade union movement has outstripped them.

6. Recasting the agrarian programme in conformity with the adopted resolution on the agrarian question.

7. Inserting a demand for the nationalisation of a number of syndicates already ripe for such a step.

This point has been formulated rather cautiously, so as to allow for a narrowing or a widening of the demand, depending upon the drafts that will be printed.

8. Adding a characterisation of the main currents in contemporary Socialism.

The Communist Manifesto contains such an addition.

The Conference directs the Central Committee to work out, on the basis of the above suggestions, a draft for a party programme. This is to be carried out within two months, and the draft to be submitted for ratification to the party congress. The Conference calls upon all organisations and all members of the party to consider drafts of the programme, to correct them, and to work out counter-proposals.

It has been pointed out that it would be desirable to create a scientific organ and develop a literature dealing with this subject, but for this we have neither the men nor the means. This is the resolution that will hasten the revision of our programme. This resolution will be forwarded abroad to enable our comrades-internationalists to take part in the revision of the programme undertaken by our party on the basis of the experience of the World War.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AT THE CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

DUE to lack of time Lenin declined to speak in favour of changing the name of the party. He referred, however, to his newly written pamphlet—*The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution,** which will serve as material for discussion in the local party organisations.

A FEW words about the conference.

There was little time and much work. The conditions in which our party finds itself are difficult. The defencist party is large, but the proletarian masses look with disfavour upon defencism and the imperialist war. Our resolutions are not adapted to the understanding of the large masses; they will serve, however, to unify the activity of our agitators and propagandists; the readers will find in them guidance for their activities. We have to talk to millions, we must draw additional forces from the masses, we must take hold of the more educated and class-conscious workers who could explain our theses in a way intelligible to the masses. We have

* V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution,* Little Lenin Library, Vol. 9.—*Ed.*

made an effort to give in our brochures a more popular presentation of our resolutions, and we hope that our comrades will do the same thing locally. The proletariat will find in our resolutions material to guide it in its movement toward the second stage of our revolution.

RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

The existence of landed estates in Russia is the material basis of the power of the semi-feudal landowners and augurs for the possibility of re-establishing the monarchy. This landownership inevitably dooms an overwhelming mass of the population of Russia, namely, the peasantry, to poverty, serfdom and dumbness, and the entire country to backwardness in all realms of life.

Peasant landownership in Russia, both *nadéls* * (of the village communities and of homesteads) and private lands (rented or bought), is from top to bottom and in every other direction enmeshed in old semi-feudal connections and relationships, the peasants being divided into categories inherited from the times of bondage, the land representing a maze of strips, etc., etc. The necessity of breaking all these antiquated and injurious partitions, to "unfence" the land, to reconstruct all relationships of landownership and agriculture on a new basis, in accordance with the new conditions of Russian and world economy, forms the material basis for the peasantry's striving to nationalise all land in the state.

Whatever the petty-bourgeois utopias, in which all the Narodnik parties and groups clothe the struggle of the peasant masses against the feudal landed estates and against all feudal fetters imposed on all landownership and land usage in Russia in general,—this struggle by itself expresses a true bourgeois-democratic, absolutely progressive and economically necessary tendency to break resolutely all these fetters.

Nationalisation of the land, being a bourgeois measure, signifies the very maximum of freedom for the class struggle thinkable in capitalist society and freedom of landownership from all non-bourgeois remnants of the past. Nationalisation of the land as abolition of private property on land would, besides, signify in practice such a powerful blow to private property in all means of production in general, that the party of the proletariat must offer every possible assistance to such a reform.

On the other hand, the well-to-do peasantry of Russia has long produced elements of a peasant bourgeoisie, and the Stolypin agrarian reform ** has undoubtedly strengthened, multiplied, and fortified those elements. At the other pole of the village there have equally become strengthened and multiplied the agricultural wage-workers, the proletarians and the mass of semi-proletarian peasantry which is close to the former.

The more resolute and consistent the breaking up and elimination of noble landownership, the more resolute and consistent the bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform in Russia in general, the more vigorous and speedy will be the development of the class struggle of the agricultural proletariat against the well-to-do peasantry (the peasant bourgeoisie).

Whether the city proletariat will succeed in leading the village proletariat and in allying with itself the mass of semi-proletarians of the village, or whether this mass will follow the peasant bourgeoisie which gravitates towards a union with Guchkov, Miliukov, with the capitalists, landowners and the

* *Nadél* was the share which the individual peasant received of the land owned by the village community collectively. The *nadél* was held by the peasant for a number of years, pending the redistribution of the community land according to the changes in the village population.—*Ed.*

** The reform which aimed at creating an economically strong section of peasant proprietors by permitting them to separate from the village commune and establish independent holdings; a plan to bolster up the autocracy in the village.—*Ed.*

counter-revolution in general, the answer to this question will determine the fate and the outcome of the Russian Revolution, provided the incipient proletarian revolution in Europe does not exercise a direct powerful influence on our country.

Proceeding from this class situation and relationship of forces, the Conference decides that

1. The party of the proletariat fights with all its might for a full and immediate confiscation of all landed estates in Russia (as well as appanages, church lands, crown lands, etc.);

2. The party is decisively in favour of immediate passing of all lands into the hands of the peasantry organised into Soviets of Peasant Deputies or in other organs of local self-government that are elected on a really democratic basis and are entirely independent of the landowners and officials;

3. The party of the proletariat demands the nationalisation of all land in the state, which means giving to the state title to all the land, with the right of local democratic institutions to manage the land;

4. The party must wage a decisive struggle; first, against the Provisional Government which, through Shingarev's declarations and through its own collective actions saddles the peasants with "voluntary agreements between peasants and landowners," *i.e.*, in practice with a land reform after the landowners' desire, and threatens with punishment for "wilful acts," *i.e.*, with violent measures on the part of the minority of the population (landowners and capitalists) against the majority; second, against the petty-bourgeois vacillations of a majority of Narodniks and Menshevik Social-Democrats who counsel the peasants to refrain from taking over the land pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly;

5. The party counsels the peasants to take the land in an organised way, by no means allowing the slightest damage to property and taking care to increase production;

6. All agrarian reforms generally can be successful and of abiding value only when the whole state is democratised, *i.e.*, when on the one hand the police, the standing army and the actually privileged bureaucracy have been abolished,—on the other hand there is the most comprehensive local self-government entirely free from control and tutelage from above;

7. It is necessary immediately and everywhere to start organising a separate organisation of the agricultural proletariat both in the form of Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies (as well as separate Soviets of Deputies from the semi-proletarian peasantry) and in the form of proletarian groups or fractions organised within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, within all the organs of local and city government, etc.;

8. The party must support the initiative of those peasant committees who, in a number of localities of Russia, give over the landowners' property and agricultural implements in the hands of the peasantry organised into those committees, for the purpose of cultivating all the land under social control and regulation;

9. The party of the proletariat must counsel the proletarians and semi-proletarians of the village to strive to form out of every landowner's estate a sufficiently large model farm which would be managed at public expense by the Soviets of Agricultural Workers' Deputies under the direction of agriculturists and with the application of the best technical methods.